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June 17 2008 Meeting Minutes

Arlington Human Rights Commission Minutes - Final June 17, 2008

Present: Sheri Baron, Marissa Briggett, Vita Cohen, Vice Chair, Christine Deshler, Jorge Loayza, Nick Minton, Chair, Nancy Rhoads, Marlene Schultz, Nancy Sweeney

Absent: Christine Carney, Bill Shea

Review of May Minutes – Minutes accepted as amended by ten commissioners with one abstention

Race and Place Dialogue Series Update – Daytime meetings are difficult for most people to attend. The AHRC was requested to be a co-sponsor in some way in the fall. We are still interested in the program but need to know more facts before we are committed to this big undertaking.

Networks and Coalitions –

Arlington Common Threads – (ACT) – Commissioners Cohen and Schultz gave an update of the June 4th meeting. Plans are being made to meet with the Arlington faith community; they have requested that Commissioner Baron meet with them in the near future to discuss our Rapid Response program; a web page is in the works; a request for AHRC information led to a discussion on how the Commission can have a more complete accounting of reported incidents and complaints and how information can be better publicized. Nancy Sweeney will work on this project. Updates will continue as to the progress of this program.

MAHRC update – Commissioner Sweeney reported that at the recent meeting guests of the Worcester Community Program visiting from St. Petersburg, Russia, were surprised to learn of so many volunteers working with the MAHRC and spoke of how difficult it is for them to deal with human rights issues in their country.

Incident and Complaints –

Colonial Village incident – Commissioners Rhoads related that a witness to this incident does not want to be involved. Commissioners Rhoads and Sweeney will meet with Commissioner Shea to create a report on what action has been decided on this case and present their findings to the Commission.

High School student incident – Chair Minton gave a run down of this phone complaint and will follow up with a response regarding this incident.

Hate Literature Drop – Commissioner Rhoads had three responses to the Arlington Advocate letter and distribution to Town Meeting members. Suggestions for financial support to organizations fighting hate crimes will be researched for future reference.

Graffiti – Chair Minton reported an auto graffiti incident. The APD treated this case as vandalism and because the act was done on private property they do not have jurisdiction over this matter. Neighbors were appalled that it took so long for the graffiti to be removed.

Subcommittee Reports –

Dialogues – programs are still being decided.

Schools – Still no response from Superintendent Levenson meeting with the AHRC. There was discussion and concern regarding bullying reports at the Brackett and Stratton Schools. Cyber texting is an issue at the Middle School. No decision.

Policies and Procedures – no report this month

Rapid Response/Publicity – The question arose as to what the town by-law is regarding graffiti displays on private property – who is responsible for cleaning it up – and what would trigger an AHRC Rapid Response. After much discussion the subcommittee would make the initial evaluation and final decision of whether the incident needed an immediate response. The Chair is always included in any decision. A suggestion was made that the Chair might send a reminder letter to the APD regarding the distribution of our brochure at every incident/complaint.

Other Business –

Chair Minton moved to adjourn. Commissioner Briggett seconded. The meeting was concluded.

*Submitted by:
Marylynn Carnell
Staff Assistant*